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The World Is Moving Around Me: A Memoir Of The Haiti Earthquake



Synopsis

On January 12, 2010, novelist Dany Laferrière had just ordered dinner at a Port-au-Prince restaurant with a friend when the earthquake struck. He survived; some three hundred thousand others did not. The quake caused widespread destruction and left over one million homeless. This moving and revelatory book is an eyewitness account of the quake and its aftermath. In a series of vignettes, Laferrière reveals the shock, rage, and grief experienced by those around him, the acts of heroism he witnessed, and his own sense of survivor guilt. At one point, his nephew, astonished at still being alive, asks his uncle not to write about "this," "this" being too horrible to give up so easily to those who were not there. But as a writer, Laferrière can't make such a promise. Still, the question is raised: to whom does this disaster belong? Who gets to talk and write about it? In this way, this book is not only the chronicle of a natural disaster; it is also a personal meditation about the responsibility and power of the written word in a manner that echoes certain post-Holocaust books. Includes a foreword by Michaëlle Jean, UN special envoy to Haiti and the former Governor General of Canada. Dany Laferrière was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1953. He is the author of fourteen novels, including *Heading South* and *How to Make Love to a Negro without Getting Tired*. His awards include the Prix Médicis and the Governor General's Literary Award. He lives in Montreal, Quebec.

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Customer Reviews

"Keen observation, incisive analysis and passionate engagement mark this author's account of the 2010 earthquake that devastated his native Haiti ... Through vignettes that range from a

paragraph to a couple of pages, novelist Laferrière delivers a knockout punch through prose favoring matter-of-fact understatement over sentimental histrionics." •Kirkus Reviews (STARRED REVIEW)"Laferrière has a lucid plain-style which may remind American readers of the best of Ernest Hemingway, specifically Hemingway's commitment to writing about the actions that produce emotions, rather than about feelings themselves ... The glimpses Laferrière records of people on the devastated streets of Port-au-Prince accrue to give a deeper substance to the idea of Haitian indomitability." •Slate.com"A compelling firsthand account with cleverly crafted imagery and skilfully interwoven narrative strands about a country shook to its bare bones, fighting to defeat the shadow of death ... Just as T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is made up of seemingly disjointed images that work together to create a whole, so too is Laferrière's memoir. It is this 'heap of broken images' to borrow Eliot's words; that are held together by the strongest thread of all: culture." •ARC magazine"Laferrière has written not only a valuable book but also a necessary one, a slim but potent volume reminding us that the people of Haiti deserve far better than the cards handed to them by fate ... In a just world, this book will excite renewed passion for helping Haiti and also a large audience for Laferrière himself, a talented writer who deserves a wide readership." •National Post"The World is Moving Around Me is unpretentious, starkly honest and good-humoured. Laferrière, a prize-winning novelist in the francophone literary world, is a masterful writer and his memoir, told in a clear and simple voice beautifully rendered by translator David Homel, is true to his vision of the essential role of culture, 'the only thing that can stand up to the earthquake; intellectual culture [and] what structures a nation. If we don't want to turn into a victim nation, we have to keep moving. We'll cry later when things are better.' " •The Globe and Mail"Keen observation, incisive analysis and passionate engagement mark this author's account of the 2010 earthquake that devastated his native Haiti ... Through vignettes that range from a paragraph to a couple of pages, novelist Laferrière delivers a knockout punch through prose favoring matter-of-fact understatement over sentimental histrionics." •Kirkus Reviews (STARRED REVIEW)"Laferrière has a lucid plain-style which may remind American readers of the best of Ernest Hemingway, specifically Hemingway's commitment to writing about the actions that produce emotions, rather than about feelings themselves ... The glimpses Laferrière records of people on the devastated streets of Port-au-Prince accrue to give a deeper substance to the idea of Haitian indomitability." •Slate.com"A compelling firsthand account with cleverly crafted imagery and skilfully interwoven narrative strands about a country shook to its bare bones, fighting to defeat the shadow of death ... Just as T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is made up of seemingly disjointed images that work together to create a whole, so

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This is a wonderful book by a Haitian author who lives in Montreal who was actually in Haiti for a writers' conference at the time of the earthquake. I have read a great many books about the earthquake mostly by outsiders which tend to voyeurism and critiques. This book conveys so much of the character of the Haitian people and the challenges they faced immediately following the "tremblement." M. Laferrière includes relevant information about people and the effect on their lives in during the earthquake in his inimitable well written prose. I have read it in the excellent English translation and now re-reading it in the original French version. As a long time habitué of Haiti, I revel in Mr. Laferrière's respectful views of the Haitian people.

Great book!

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I am a French student and have a few of Dany Laferrière's books in French. My girlfriend bought this book for me in English. Even translated Laferrière is a magnificent writer. This is a memoir, not a history book. If you want to learn about a real person who carries the soul of Haiti in his writings then read this book. If you want a history book on the earthquake just use google.

The book was very well written, but it became clear at a point that the story was veering from relating the story of the earthquake to a more personal perspective. I picked this book because I wanted to learn more about the earthquake and its effect on people, not just the author and his family. I guess I was expecting more than a memoir could give.

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